



## South Mountain Corridor Study

### Citizens Advisory Team

### **DRAFT** Meeting Summary

**Date:** May 26, 2005  
**Time:** 5:30 p.m.  
**Location:** GRIC District 6 Komatke Center, Learning Center Meeting Hall

#### **CAT Members Attending:**

LaQuinta Allison, Gila River Indian Community  
Rock Argabright, Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee  
Kris Black, Ahwatukee Foothills HOA  
Steve Boschen, Valley Forward  
Jim Buster, City of Avondale  
Ron Chohamin, Lakewood HOA  
Peggy Eastburn, Estrella Village Planning Committee  
Michael Goodman, Phx Mtns Preservation Council

Don Jones, Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Rudy Martinez, Ahwatukee Village Planning Committee  
Robert Moss, United Arizona Dairymen  
Nathaniel Percharo, I-10 Pecos Landowners  
Laura Prendergast, Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development  
Jim Strogon, Kyrene Lagos Elementary School  
Stephen Williams, Maricopa County Farm Bureau

#### **Staff and Consultants:**

Jack Allen, HDR  
Michael Bruder, ADOT  
Matt Burdick, ADOT  
Kelly Cairo, GRA  
Amy Edwards, HDR  
Ralph Ellis, ADOT

Theresa Gunn, GCI  
Don Herp, City of Phoenix  
Dan Lance, ADOT  
John Roberts, GRIC  
Ben Spargo, HDR  
Bill Vachon, FHWA  
Shannon Wilhelmsen, ADOT

#### **Citizens:**

Danny Bouting  
Tim Brislin  
Clayton Danzeisen  
Michell Eastburn  
William Eastburn  
David Folts

Dan Hurt  
Nedra Lindsay  
Matthew Alan Lord  
Lisa Percharo  
Bill Ramsay  
Fred Roberts

#### **Action Plan:**

Task/Activity	Who	When
Presentation regarding new technology in road design (ITS).	Amy	Future CAT meeting
Send SMCAT members copies of the 51 <sup>st</sup> TI options being studied	Theresa	Next CAT meeting
Bring MAG modeling area map to indicated which part of Pinal County is included	Amy	Next CAT meeting
Provide traffic counts for Pecos, Riggs, Queen Creek, and 51st Ave.	Amy	Future CAT meeting
Traffic modeling map changes: bigger title on chart different color to aid comparison, such as 77 Ave/no-build use three lines for comparison, (I-10 at Broadway 2003/no-	Amy	Next CAT meeting

build/build)		
Provide traffic modeling on Pecos for no-build and modeling on Pecos for an alignment south of Pecos.	Amy	Future CAT meeting – dependent upon receiving GRIC alternatives.

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Theresa Gunn welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained that comments from public attendees would be accepted in writing, and if possible, responses would be provided at the conclusion of the meeting. She asked CAT members to introduce themselves and note any comments or concerns they have at this time.

### ***CAT Member Comments:***

- People are concerned about loss of business in response to HDR notification letter regarding the path of the freeway. **Response:** HDR notified landowners a few years ago, but not recently.
- I-10 landowners want increased participation.
- Would like a presentation regarding new technology in road design – ITS.
- After the last meeting, there was a newspaper editorial discussing six-lane, 50 ft high bridges along Pecos Road. Want to make it clear that this is not what we discussed at the meeting.

## **Follow Up from Last Meeting**

Amy Edwards addressed items for follow-up. Work remains to resolve right-of-way footprints, profile issues, and interchange layout. A question from last meeting had come up regarding a future bridge crossing of the Salt River at 91<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Phoenix has it in their master plan but not in long range plans at this time. The County does not have it in their long range plan. Coordination would have to occur with GRIC to design and build this facility. The county has a website where the public can suggest projects that should be considered.

Theresa Gunn provided information on the request for crime research. The Phoenix Police Department does not have statistics available regarding crime rates and new freeways. SMCAT could formally request a research project. If accepted, the project would be added to a priority list. Once underway, the project would take approximately six months. Following discussion, a majority of SMCAT members agreed to make a formal request. Gunn offered a letter of formal request for members to sign, which was prepared in the event the SMCAT wished to pursue this issue.

Members discussed under what conditions alternates would be allowed to participate on the SMCAT. The group agreed that the use of alternates would be used only for unexpected emergencies, with only one alternate, and discussion between the member and alternate should be made a priority. Specifically, alternates may attend the SMCAT meeting, sit at the discussion table and take notes, but will not be part of the preferred alternative selection.

### ***CAT Member Questions/Comments:***

- **Question:** What is meant by our vote? **Response:** You will develop criteria and evaluate the alternatives using a keypad system.
- **Question:** What is the timeframe for our recommendation? **Response:** Fall/winter of 2005.
- **Question:** The City of Phoenix stated that our statement of record would not be released until 2007. **Response:** SMCAT will select a preferred west side alternative in the fall/winter of this year. That information goes into the draft EIS, which is reviewed by agencies and provided for public comment in summer of 2006. The soonest the official Record of Decision could be determined would be 2007. The draft EIS in 2006 will show a preferred alternative on the west side, and will not show a preferred alternative for the east side due to ongoing negotiations with GRIC.
- **Question:** When will we discuss options on Pecos Road? We discussed grade options with 40<sup>th</sup> Street elevated. **Response:** We did discuss grade options at the last meeting, which included a semi-depressed option as well. We are now considering below-grade options for Pecos Road.
- **Question:** We were told the EIS had to include a freeway-to-freeway connection. **Response:** This is true of the Final EIS, the draft document only needs to show options.
- **Question:** Was there a GRIC straw vote in May? **Response:** No vote was called for.

### **51st Avenue Traffic Interchange Alternatives**

Ben Spargo reviewed the four options drawn by SMCAT members at the previous meeting. SMCAT's option 1 will be added to the options forwarded for further study. This option allows access to 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue via an interchange at Estrella Drive, Dusty Lane access, and would require less land from South Mountain Park than the original alternative developed during this project.

### ***CAT Member Questions/Comments:***

- **Question:** Is the I-10 reliever part of this junction? **Response:** No.
- **Comment:** The house on the preserve is not privately owned. It is owned by the City of Phoenix and is a park ranger's house.
- **Comment:** Would like to have maps of the options that are being studied.
- **Question:** What occurs when a project on Section 4(f) land causes a change to another street that is not 4F? **Response:** Effects on the other street must be studied as part of this project as well.

### **Process Update**

Amy Edwards updated the group regarding the EIS process and schedule. With technical reports in process at this time, the soonest the official Record of Decision could be determined would be 2007.

### ***CAT Member Questions/Comments:***

- **Question:** Is there a process in place for the Gila River Indian Community to make a decision about the study? **Response:** We don't know the process. We will bring this question to GRIC.
- **Question:** Is there a geographic point at which a GRIC option would have no effect? **Response:** Yes, this would be at the west side options, beginning around 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- **Comment:** I-10 Landowners are under the impression the study would be done.
- **Comment:** People along 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue want to know if their project in Laveen will be affected if the South Mountain Freeway is in the 59<sup>th</sup>/60<sup>th</sup> avenue area. Without knowing how much right-of-way would be needed, they can't make plans.
- **Question:** If there is a GRIC alternative, would it affect 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue? **Response:** We don't know, but it is possible because we don't have alternatives.
- **Question:** If a GRIC alternative comes forward, who would study impacts? **Response:** This is an ADOT study. However, it is up to the Community how involved they would like to be.
- **Question:** The Community doesn't have a timeline, but this project does? **Response:** Yes, this project has a schedule we are trying to meet, however it is dynamic
- **Question:** Has there been any communication from GRIC? **Response:** We don't have a yes or a no. **Comment:** Why don't we just decide to go down Pecos? Then we can get involved in how to do this with the least impact. Let's do it and work on doing it right. An ADOT person told me this (alignment on Pecos) would happen because ADOT owns the land. **Response:** We are looking at how to best design a freeway on Pecos Road now. We are not committing to a hard decision because we are waiting for approval to study from GRIC.
- **Comment:** The community has always taken a "no" stance, but want to make sure there is access north to Ahwatukee. **Response:** There is a Tribal resolution, but we were told to approach the districts, and we meet monthly with the Tribal Coordination Team.
- **Comment:** At some point we do have to decide to stop waiting.
- **Question:** Have allottees had a vote? **Response:** Yes and they support the freeway.

### **Traffic Modeling**

Amy Edwards reviewed traffic modeling. Information from MAG is now available on projections for 2030. Each time MAG updates modeling, HDR reruns projections to review the purpose and need. SMCAT members received 2030 information. Once CAT comments are incorporated for readability and general usefulness of information, it will be distributed to the public as well.

### ***CAT Member Questions/Comments:***

- **Comment:** Would like to see Pinal figures.

- **Question:** How do you handle an area where the 202 joins I-10 and Pecos to I-10? **Response:** There are periodic updates on counts which will be added to the model.
- **Comment:** People will be interested in the Pecos/202/I-10 count.
- **Comment:** Would like to see traffic counts for Pecos, Riggs, Queen Creek, and 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue. **Response:** Some of these counts may be available now, some may have to wait until a more in-depth stage of the study.
- **Comment:** MAG's update for number of trips per household is less in 2030 than 2025 which has resulted in lower traffic projections.
- **Comment:** No-build should not affect the north and northeast areas on the map, this is confusing on this map.
- **Comment:** The map assumes that everything in the Regional Transportation Plan is built, including improvements to freeways, streets, light rail, and the I-10 reliever.
- **Comment:** Numbers regarding Queen Creek sound very short. Also, development patterns are changing rapidly.
- **Comment:** MAG should contact outlying areas to determine plans, including Tucson and Marana.
- **Question:** Did the GRIC borderland study get included in this modeling? **Response:** Don't know.
- **Comment:** Would like to see the figures on the number of square feet of retail compared to the number of vehicles generated from retail worked into these models. Have seen this comparison previously.
- **Comment:** Need a bigger title on the chart.
- **Comment:** Don't know if it's better to have bigger or smaller numbers on freeways. **Response:** This has to do with level of service. This information is forthcoming and compares volume to capacity analysis.
- **Comment:** Use different color on the chart to aid comparisons.
- **Comment:** Traffic operations are one of the things that will be considered.

## **DEIS Outline and NEPA Process**

Jack Allen reviewed what the table of contents for the draft EIS might look like. One component is that the document must be reader-friendly to the public. The document will probably be about 600 pages.

### ***CAT Member Question:***

- **Question:** Will this come out a chapter at a time? **Response:** No. You will be asked to review the entire document at once. However, it will include the information and technical reports presented here at meetings – but written as a draft EIS.

## **Respond to Written Comments/Questions**

Edwards responded to public questions and comments submitted, including:

### **David Folts, Concerned Families Along South Mountain Loop 202**

- **Question:** What approximate date will the draft EIS be published? **Response:** Fall of 2006, however, this is subject to change.
- **Question:** How close will proposed South Mountain Loop 202 be to San Juan Drive in South Mountain Park? **Response:** We don't have dimensions, this will vary based on the alternatives, such as a cut-section or tunnel.
- **Question:** How many acres of South Mountain Park are taken to build SMCAT Alternative 1? Include areas used for drainage, lighting and right-of-way areas. **Response:** Don't know at this time. This will be shown in the final analysis.
- **Question:** Do the traffic flow volumes also include traffic from the I-10 Reliever? **Response:** Yes, the model includes projected traffic from I-10 reliever.
- **Question:** Do the no-build traffic flow volumes take into account the improvements that are planned along I-10 that were discussed in last month's meeting? **Response:** Yes.
- **Question:** At last month's meeting I asked about the Section 4(f) process and how the procedure of a visual check for American Indian Artifacts was insufficient way to complete this with all the instruments now available to identify certain materials underground. Why isn't ADOT FHWA and HDR Engineering using ground penetrating radar to identify any American Indian artifacts below the soil? Many of these tools sell for \$3000-\$4000 and many businesses perform this service in such a situation. I would like this question entered in the meeting minutes. **Response:** At this stage of the process research is performed and visual surface surveys. We don't do more until we are on the property.
- **Question:** Does ADOT, FHWA or HDR Engineering do any geophysical surveys (ground penetrating radar) as a standard process before building a highway? If this is not a standard process what makes this tool necessary when designing and building a highway? **Response:** No. This is traditionally later in the process.
- **Question:** You show projected traffic flows in 2025. Why not show the percent of cars and include the percent of trucks using South Mountain Loop 202 including the truck traffic from the I-10 Reliever? **Response:** This is the first phase of traffic information. More information is forthcoming.

### **Clayton Danzeisen, Danzeisen Dairy and Maricopa County Farm Bureau**

- **Question:** Who will make the final decision concerning the route South Mountain freeway will take? **Response:** This is a joint ADOT and FHWA decision.
- **Question:** Can ADOT eliminate the line starting with GRIC right now? **Response:** Due to South Mountain Park, we have to look at all options as long as they are a possibility.

- **Question:** Does the traffic model consider traffic coming through the valley from Quartzite, Tucson, or Flagstaff for instance? **Response:** Yes.
- **Question:** Traffic model bubble – Does it work to have three lines? Such as, I-10 at Broadway 2003/no-build/build. **Response:** This is a good suggestion.
- **Question:** Since the I-10 reliever will not be built until after South Mountain, wouldn't it be better to leave it out of the model? **Response:** Model looks at full build out at 2030.

#### **William Ramsay**

- **Question:** If SMCAT concludes its meeting with the status of the South Mountain eastern terminus being undecided in the draft EIS, what public forum will be available for review and input on the final decision on the eastern alignment and terminus? **Response:** We would not say the CAT was finished with only a west side alternative. There would be ongoing public involvement.
- **Question:** Is Lagos Elementary School officially considered Section 4(f)? **Response:** No. However, the ball fields and playgrounds are Section 4(f).
- **Question:** If so, what neighborhoods surrounding Lagos are being considered as part of the Section 4(f) study? **Response:** Section 4(f) applies to a neighborhood only when it is eligible for historic designation.

#### **CAT Member Questions/Comments:**

- **Question:** Can the governor or Legislature change an ADOT decision? **Response:** No, they can't change the outcome of a study. They could pass a law saying no money can be spent.
- **Question:** Laveen wants to know if the 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue alignment is at all flexible. **Response:** Adjustments discussed at the last meeting occur to protect Section 4(f) sites. To date, alignments have not been shifted for a specific landowner, but rather for legally mandated reasons. During final design, the alignment is fine tuned to miss properties, but these are usually minor tweaks.
- **Question:** What is the boundary between the west and east sides alternatives? **Response:** 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- **Question:** Why study 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue/South Mountain Park if the park must be avoided? **Response:** The study can't consider land on a sovereign nation unless allowed to do so, whereas South Mountain Park can be studied.
- **Question:** How long do you wait for information from GRIC? **Response:** Don't know. But there are still discussions occurring, so the door is not shut.
- **Comment:** Want traffic modeling on Pecos for no-build and modeling on Pecos for an alignment south of Pecos.
- **Comment:** It is frustrating to see nothing coming from the Tribe. We don't know what's happening, which feels like a "no" from the Tribe. If it is a no, we need to know this so we can move on. Please convey this information to the Tribe.

### **Adjourn**

Theresa Gunn announced SMCAT members will receive the draft fact sheet copy by mail.

### **Next Meeting**

- Thursday, June 23, 2005 at 5:30 p.m.  
GRIC District 6 Komatke Center – Learning Center Meeting Hall.